

REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

**Statement at the of the 14th United Nations Congress
on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice**

Kyoto, 11 March 2021

**Agenda item 6 (a) - International cooperation and technical assistance to prevent and
address all forms of crime: Terrorism in all its form and manifestations**

Mr. President,

Terrorism in all its forms and manifestations continues to pose a serious threat to international peace and security. It challenges many countries and societies, undermining their safety, social cohesion and wellbeing of the people.

Armenia believes that in the face of this crime the international community should stand united and make use of all existing legal and practical mechanisms and toolkits to strengthen international and national criminal justice responses to prevent, prosecute and punish the perpetrators and supporters of terrorism.

We recognise the valuable support and mechanisms provided by the UNODC Terrorism Prevention Branch, UN Office of Counter Terrorism and other international bodies, which have a key role to play in this field, guided, inter alia, by the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

We believe that those mechanisms, if implemented properly, could pave the way for the prevention and, ultimately, eradication of terrorism. In this regard the political will of the country and its leadership are of key importance to ensure the proper implementation of counter-terrorism strategies and mechanisms in their criminal justice systems.

The lack of such will or even the direct and institutionalised financial and logistical support to terrorism by some countries hamper our international efforts, and preclude the cooperation between the criminal justice systems of countries in the area of sharing of information on financing, travel and other logistical support to terrorists and their crimes including in the context of armed conflicts.

Mr. President,

On 27 September 2020, Azerbaijan unleashed a large-scale military aggression against Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) and its people supported by Turkey and accompanied by extensive engagement of foreign terrorist fighters in the hostilities. This has been attested to by ample credible and verifiable information and evidence on the Internet and in the battlefield, intelligence sources of many countries, including the OSCE MG Co-chair countries, as well as testimonies of foreign terrorist fighters captured by the Defense Army of Artsakh and results of journalistic investigations.

Mr. President,

We have been witnessing the gradual evolution and transformational change of the concept of foreign terrorist fighters, when these groups are deployed in various parts of the world as proxy army to project foreign and military policy objectives of certain states, where open and direct involvement of armed forces might raise eyebrows, and when their crimes and actions remain outside of usual control and accountability applicable in the cases of regular armed forces.

The recent war against Artsakh made obvious the shortcomings of the existing instruments of international law, in particular on the part of enforcement, since the current system is founded on the traditional assumption of the political will of the states to engage in good faith in combating terrorism.

In this vein, more robust international cooperation is required to identify, prosecute, and punish those who have been engaged in the perpetration of terrorism, as well as those who have been facilitating the engagement of the FTFs in armed conflicts. We need to ensure that the existing international mechanisms and networks are well prepared and adapted to promptly react to such crimes.

In this context, Armenia welcomes the Kyoto Declaration, which extensively addresses the crime of terrorism, including the need “to prevent and tackle financial and logistical support to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons, in compliance with obligations under applicable international law”.

Thank you Mr. President

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First right of reply: Agenda item 6 (a) - International cooperation and technical assistance to prevent and address all forms of crime: Terrorism in all its form and manifestations

Mr. President,

I would like to use my right of reply to react to unfounded and preposterous allegations contained in the statements of the delegations of Azerbaijan and Turkey.

We deeply regret that the Turkish authorities seem to continue pursuing their aggressive and hate-filled policy against Armenia and the Armenian nation. We equally regret that Turkey does not use its huge potential and does not put its weight behind an agenda aimed at promoting stability and peace in our region. The statement of the Turkish delegation repeats the narrative of Turkish authorities used right before the September 2020 war of aggression against Artsakh and its people. We consider this as a direct threat against Armenia.

Mr. President,

Referring to baseless and groundless claims of the Azerbaijani delegation, I would like to stress that the falsity of this propaganda is most obvious amid their attempts to present so-called “lists of Armenian-recruited foreign fighters”. Azerbaijan aims to substantiate its claims by compiling some lists, comprising names of almost everybody who visited Nagorno-Karabakh during last years, including journalists, businessmen, clergy or artists, or people who merely supported Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia on social networks.

It seems that Azerbaijani authorities follow the postulate of the notorious Nazi leader who said that lies should be so "colossal" that no one would believe that someone "could have the impudence to distort the truth so infamously”.

Mr. President,

The statements of the delegations of Turkey and Azerbaijan are aimed at offsetting the plethora of well-documented, credible evidence and independent reports substantiating Azerbaijan’s and Turkey’s recruitment and use of foreign terrorist fighters in their recent war of aggression and war crimes committed against the Republic of Artsakh and its people.

For the attention of the distinguished delegates of the Congress, the delegation of Armenia is going to circulate a detailed and informative fact-sheet on the recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters by Turkey and their subsequent transfer and deployment to Azerbaijan.

Mr. President,

We would like to stress that attempts of Azerbaijan to define as illegal or criminal all economic, social, cultural, humanitarian and other activities in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) are not based on any factual evidence and are aimed to further violate the individual and collective human rights of the people of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) and thus should be unequivocally condemned.

We also deplore and consider unacceptable the defamatory and derogatory references to the Armenian nation, both in Armenia and living in diaspora communities, contained in the statement of the delegation of Azerbaijan.

Such statements will lead to an atmosphere, where ethnic Armenians worldwide are made targets of hate crimes due to the repeated and unpunished use of inflammatory language by the Azerbaijani and Turkish authorities. This is yet another vivid example of incitement to violence as well as hatred and Armenophobia fostered in Azerbaijan for many decades.

Mr. President,

To conclude, Mr President, it is thus obvious that Azerbaijan and Turkey, and their respective delegations are making ill-advised attempts to engage in a defamation campaign against Armenia and the Armenian people, with the purpose of deflecting the attention of the international community from their reckless and unlawful activities in our region.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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Second right of reply: Agenda item 6 (a) - International cooperation and technical assistance to prevent and address all forms of crime: Terrorism in all its form and manifestations

Mr. President,

It is regrettable that in an effort to divert the attention from the extensive body of internationally verified evidence confirming the use of foreign terrorist fighters recruited and relocated to Azerbaijan with the purpose of their involvement in the Azerbaijani war of aggression against Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) with the direct help of Turkey, both Turkey and Azerbaijan continue their attempts to present themselves as responsible and dedicated members of the international community and as victims of terrorism.

Let me remind the international community and the distinguished delegates to this Congress that time and again Azerbaijan has been resorting to the use of force to suppress the freedom and all human rights of the people of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh). The war of aggression launched in September 2020 was carried out with numerous war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The systematic shelling of civilian population, settlements and infrastructure, including with cluster munition, with the aim to force the civilians out of their homes and eventually from their homeland, the use of incendiary weapons containing white phosphorus against the civilians and the forested areas of Nagorno-Karabakh resulting in huge human sufferings and damage to environment, the intentional targeting and deliberate destruction of the Armenian cultural and religious heritage and monuments both during and after the war - these are but few examples of crimes committed by Azerbaijani armed forces and should be condemned resolutely and unequivocally.

And currently thousands of indigenous Armenian cultural monuments in the territories of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) occupied by Azerbaijan are facing the same fate of deliberate destruction and annihilation.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I would like to touch upon the following. The delegation of Azerbaijan has been referring to the principles of international law as an excuse for resorting to the use of force and aggression, and committing all forms of crime, including war crimes and crimes against humanity.

But no matter how often one invokes some of the principles of the international law, this does not preclude responsibility for using force to settle a dispute. There is no single principle of international law which allows to carry out war crimes and crimes against humanity and remain unpunished.

Thank you, Mr. President